

Spring 1988

Dakotah Poesy (1988)

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Recommended Citation

Swanson, James and Schoepf, Cathi, "Dakotah Poesy (1988)" (1988). *New Tricks*. 3.
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1987-88 DAKOTAH

Poesy



DAKOTA STATE
COLLEGE

Madison, South Dakota 57042-1799

THE STORY OF MY LIFE

by Florence Miller

DAKOTAH POESY

Any self-respecting housewife would have
cleaned it

You can't even get the lid closed.

I'll get some index cards - maybe even the extra
cards that say

"From the kitchen of

I'll get some index cards - maybe even the extra
cards that say

and the hot dish

Mary's
casserole

the creative work of the
students, staff, and friends

of

Dakota State College

What's the "Dakota State College" written on
a paper napkin

They were so good when Margaret brought them
for coffee in 1966.

"Marlene's Stew." Well, I never liked that stew
much, but it

makes me feel good to remember Marlene.

Professor James Swanson

Here's one in the "Dakota State College" That was
the year we

stopped to see the "Dakota State College" and she had
just taken

Faculty Advisor

Cathi Schoepf

Editor

THE STORY OF MY LIFE

by Florence Muller

It's a disgrace

Any self-respecting housewife would have
cleaned it up long ago;

You can't even get the lid closed.

I'll get some index cards - maybe even the cute
ones that say

"From the kitchen of ____."

I'll get some dividers that divide the soups from
the desserts

and the hot dishes from the salads.

Meanwhile, I need to find the recipe for eggplant
casserole.

What's this? "Lemon Doubledackers" written on
a paper napkin -

They were so good when Margaret brought them
for coffee in 1968.

"Marlene's Stew." Well, I never liked that stew
much, but it

makes me feel good to remember Marlene.

Here's one in Minnie's handwriting. That was
the year we

stopped to see them in Hot Springs and she had
just taken

rhubarb pudding out of the oven. Our Susan
and their Carl were both
babies then.

Here's one for chocolate upside-down cake that
Annie's friend

Debbie helped us make. I sent some home with
her or she never
would have gone.

"Old Fashioned Divinity" that Gladys brought
me on my birthday

back in 1959. I still haven't learned to make it
like she did.

I can't neaten up that recipe box.

My life is in there.

WHERE DO MONSTERS GO?

By Tom Cummins

Where did all the monsters go
That one time filled my head?
The ones that dwelled in closets,
And lived underneath my bed.
The ones who looked like coat racks
When the lights were on,
The shadowy reminders
That haunted me till dawn.
Where have all these monsters gone
Now that I am bolder?

Or have they left my domicile
To haunt somebody else,
Who never had the pleasure
Of a monster for himself?
I thought those monsters loved me,
And I thought they'd stay around,
But it seems no matter where I look,
None of them are found.
Maybe they were images,
Or games my mind once played.
It doesn't really matter
But I wish that they'd have stayed.
'Cause now my life is empty,
Absent from the fear,
That used to give me goose bumps
When those spooks were here.
Some good things have come out of this
But I don't know which is best.
Some nights I feel so lonely,
But at least I get some rest.

WHY?

by Verlin Prostrullo, Jr.

Why was this done?
Why was I chosen?
I did nothing to deserve this!
The insult, humiliation, and degradation!
The tears, the pain, the anger,
do nothing to expel this terror
from my mind.
Did I provoke this?
Was I too trusting?
Am I to blame?
Do you blame me? It wasn't my fault!
My neighbors shun me.
Do they accuse me, too?
How can they blame me?
My mind is in shreds
With my body broken.
Where are the answers to my questions?
I've been to your house countless
Times since
Your puppet heard me, but have you?
Do I have to come to you to get my answers?
None are forthcoming here,
And yet will you listen when I arrive?
My appointment with you is tomorrow.

KIDS

by Brenda Grimm

they make me crazy--
I'm going mad!
till I stop
and realize
it's not so bad...
and when I see through their eyes
the Enormities they perceive,
the questions they must answer--
so much to conceive...

so I calm myself
put the books aside
and join them in their quest;
I'm a child,
through them,
to them,
the best.

ALIENS FROM MINNESOTA

(for Connie, Rose, and Jill)

by Mollie Freier

Like aliens whose spaceship
Has been hidden in a slough,
Poems lurk in the ditches
On the pitch-dark highway
With no houses in sight.

Insects are hurled into the headlights
Like shooting stars.
The road hurries forward
To keep ahead of us.

The poems want to capture us,
Take us back to the mother-ship
And examine us.
Turn us inside out
With strange instruments.
So we must capture them,
Examine them,
Record them.

Road construction signs are folded down
And form orange angles in the high beams.
Messages about speed limits flare from the road-
side.

We watch for the poems in the moonlight,
In the high beams.
But the moon is still in its first quarter--

Its first eighth--
And hardly ripe.
It is only a faint yellow glimmer
Lounging just above the wheatfields.
The headlights show only
The yellow dashes
In the middle of the road
Rushing rhythmically toward us
In a code that could tip us off
If we knew how to read it.

The poems crouch in the ditches,
In the cornfields and pastures,
But their dim outlines
Can be seen in the dark.
Even though the moon
Is only a yellow sliver
It is a yellow scythe,
Helping in their harvest.

PHIL'S JUMP

by Dominique Entwisle

Floating through the empty sky
Without any wings,
Among the clouds --
No other feeling like it in the world.
Is there any other sensation with the same high?
Phil, I am telling you, as your brother, as your
twin,
You will never feel such a thrill again.

Skydiving – electric feeling – unique.
Time has no meaning,
Seconds to minutes,
Minutes to hours.
Rest all your fears in my hands,
No need to be phobic.
Together we'll plummet side by side,
Re-entering earth together,
Like when we were born,
Dependent again upon the safety of a tiny cord.
My years will show you the way.
You mean too much to let anything happen.

The aircraft rises; gravity pulls.
The same gravity tugs us back.
So look to your window, Phil,
To the beautiful blue; relax, it will soon be over.
Soon we will float
Through the powderpuff clouds.
Reaching for the ground miles below.

The time is now.
Before our jump,
I must tell you, my identical twin,
How I have envied you.
Identical in looks, oh yes,
Even our own parents had problems in telling us
apart.
But in actions, oh, it was so easy to tell.
Phil has the ability,
Phil has the brain,
Phil has the creativity,

Phil, Phil
Has the girl.
Phil.

What did I have?
The twin of Phil,
Oh, yes, Peter
The follower,
The shadow,
Always two steps behind,
Never getting ahead.
Not ever catching up.
Phil, you may ask why I talk this way.
I tell you now as we are about to jump
For one last time that we're going to play switch.
This time for eternity.
For when we land Peter will be dead
And Phil will live.
For when we land you will be dead
And I will be Phil.

ENCOUNTER

by James Swanson

I met him early, as usual, this morning,
my old friend.
I know him so well that I take him for granted.
We nearly always chat.
But, unaccountably, he looked strangely
pained.
He looked me square in the eye--frightened.
He held me.
Startled, the way reasonable people are
confronted with an embarrassing situation,
I tried small talk.
"Uh, what's the trouble, old buddy?"
I said.
And he said, "I'm growing old."
"Oh, hell, aren't we all!" I said.
"Look at me! Look at me!" he said again, quite
unreasonably.
I tried to think of something, like anything,
to get the subject upbeat,
but no go.
He wanted to talk.
Serious!

I didn't.
"I'm old," he said.
"Bullshit," I said.
"Listen to me," he said.
"Bullshit," I said.
"You won't talk," he said. And stopped.
But pinned me with the saddest look I have ever
seen.

I winced but continued shaving.

A FAREWELL TO TURK

by Connie Weber

Ah, Turk...you little jerk
Filled with pep and with perk.
A charmer with your big brown eyes
...soft, cuddly...What lies!
Household manner disappeared
As doorway barrier was cleared.
Off you'd run like a male slut
Not a care in the world but
To round up your friends in crime
And hit the street...ah, sublime.

Choosing your pals without a care,
With Black Larson your food you share.
Over to Weezer Wickersham's you'd go
Dumb as a doorknob...ham...all show.
On to Snoopy Johnson's and Skylar Stahl's
Find Zeb Longhair Hutton and on to Dusty
Waddell's

Shying clear of huge Duchess Swift....no jeers -
She'll rearrange your tail, and shift your ears.

Next to Spuds McComsy's, the ballpark star;
Forget Pugs Hiller...old, slow...not up to par.
Go visit the girls (hookers all),
Only two females for you all.
But you'd make do
Sharing the two.
Sheena Fox who plays chicken with the cars,
And Bear Pullman whose sexual habit jars
The decency of our neighborhoods.
Ye gods!...the generations from her broods!

After your communal romp in the hay
Off you'd go without delay.
How hard to realize
Outdoor life...so unwise.
Housebound..you're a saint
But your toilet habits made me faint.
How humiliating your little jaunts
Your outdoor trips...Oh, haunts!

I near fell through the floor
When the principal came to the door.
He felt sure you, Turk, didn't need
Higher education. He goshed and geeed.
"Keep your dog at home,
To school he shouldn't roam."
Oh, yes, and I recall
When you and Weezer had a ball

Visiting that shady Johnson Lady...
(no matter how poxed and jady).
Can't you see your life depends
On your choice of decent friends?
Oh that Weezer, Weezer, Weezer!
Beggardly old geezer.
You should have guessed his true stripe
Lapping Black Larson's puddles down his pipe!
Black Larson leaking on our Bar-B-Quer -
A dog I'd gladly love to skewer.
And Tigger Stoops, thief...crook...a bust,
Skateboarding dogs shouldn't trust.

Having pets brings joys and woes.
Gained a few friends...many more foes.
Sadness, too, when Ginger Meyers suddenly
sick--
Put to sleep...touched us to the quick.
9 lives finally ran out for Sparky Larson
Run over thrice by a 3-wheeler...died...rat
poison,
After surviving hit and run...
A chewing by Duchess Swift and son,
Hide weighted down you see
With buckshot... and bb.
Black Larson who passes gas,
Bear Pullman, that hussy lass.
Dusty Waddell, ugly as sin,
Never to know where he has been.
White, gray, tan, brown and black.
Neighborhood hounds we don't lack.

Ah! Turk, Turk, Turk!
 You roving little jerk.
 Had you minded your Q's and P's,
 You'd still be living a life of ease.
 Digging holes with Weezer's help-
 Stinker, Mutt...canine whelp!
 Dreaming all night and making dog plans,
 Rolling, barking, raiding garbage cans.
 Now you preen your doggy wings...holy cow,
 Playing harps...after touring Doggie Dachau.

AWE

by Brenda Grimm

I watched the stumbling foal
 grow into a gracious mare,
 I watched her rear an offspring--
 so perfect,
 my Angel's heir...
 with spirits bursting
 they welcome the coming spring--
 no goddess has touched their beauty,
 no nobler
 bred any king.

ETUDE ON THE MASTERS

by Connie Weber

A mind is dead and then alive
 As we, on olden thoughts, begin to thrive.
 Touching our minds and infecting our hearts
 With their ever so eloquent darts.

Here we learn to admire
 The crusty old Bards' warnings of hell-fire.
 And we think...thank and thought
 On the guarded words they wrought.

First, with Milton we muddled through...
 The blind to see he drew.
 An inner sight he makes us see,
 A divine deed of higher decree.

Samson's haughty behavior,
 Postpones his role of national savior.
 Then, realizing at last, his prophetic goal
 Saves himself from inevitable Sheol.

And let us not misrecollect
 Sad tale of Phaedra, my select.
 Heaped upon her, a load of guilt,
 For round this maid, the story built.

Where unwanted emotions ruled over reason
On the Isle of Troezon.
We hail, (or hate) author Jean Racine,
Weighing The unholy, insane and obscene.

Of course there are Alexander Pope's
Arguments on mankind's immortal hopes.
The impious straining to become like God.
Man...you presumptuous clod!

Certainly he leads us to see
(At least in theory if not reality),
That man must submit his pride and desire
To the Supreme...that which is higher.
Include we must, esteemed Voltaire,
Who wrote with flourish and with flair
Of Candide, naive and ingenuous,
And of fame and fortune, fleeting and tenuous.

Blundering through a life dreary
Trying to live the Leibnitz theory.
From country to country he trudged and fought
To win the Mademoiselle he so dearly sought.

What then did this uninspired eye see
Of the fireworks and parades of Poetry?
This mind too dull to scale the scree?
Too colorless to appreciate their plea?
I search my mind and extend my ear
Vainly hoping and longing to hear,
As our learned Professor brings to the fore
Perception and training to dig this lore.

Alas, alack...and next amaze!
I, moving to a new phase?
Heaven forbid, oh my, egad!
Methinks I enjoy this new fad.

G.R.

by Brenda Grimm

In his heart
he holds a knowledge
of the way things were meant to be.
In his eyes
there shines a love of God
he shares so openly...
He's witnessed considerable sadness--
still that light does shine,
many have been the occasions
that his strength
has restored mine...
He expresses through his gentle demeanor
there is goodness in man--
and though none of us could be flawless
he almost proves we can.

There has never been a time
that I could not count on him being there,
and seldom, if ever, I have felt
that he didn't truly care...

I write this with sincere respect
for a man who is like no other--
my brother.

INSANITY

by Mike Black

How many days have I looked at you?
I can remember the first time,
But the rest has become a blur.
The casual glance from your piercing eyes
Makes my knees quiver and like a hot knife
Through butter cut to the very center of my
heart.

Strength and size make me feel important.
Intelligence is my greatest asset.
I cannot wait to see you each day
And wish I did not have to,
When you come close to me
My strength ebbs, I become small
And my mind freezes with fear.
Yes, I can see my troubles.

To fight for or to flee from
Your affections I cannot answer.
Give to me a sign of your motives;
Is entrapment your design or is it
To flirt and be fickle as many would?
Sanity leaves me when you smile that smile
And give me that look.
I want to float among the clouds;
I desire the madness but need it not.
Help me, dear one, to find myself.

COMMUNISM

(Reflections on the Gorbachev visit to U.S.)

Dec. 7, 1987)

by Gerry Lange

COMMUNISM

like
white corpuscles
tells us
something is wrong
with
the body politic.
"The scalpel,"
cry
the ideologues,
"Let us operate!"
"Not so fast,
caution
the conservatives,
"better to
nourish the body,
the pus
will drain out
in time."

HE

by Elaine Muller

He came into my life
like a gentle spring breeze

He never realized that he
had become special to me

He slowly drifted away
like a cold winter wind

He will never know he broke
my heart,
leaving sadness
within.

SOMEDAY

by Tom Cummins

Your smile stole my heart
Upon that special day,
And suddenly I felt you
Steal my breath away.
I tried to speak but couldn't.
The words could not be found.
The air was still and quiet.
I uttered not a sound.

I never thought a feeling,
A feeling quite like this,
Would come about so strongly
Every time we kiss.
If only I could tell you
Just how I feel inside,
Our lives could be so full of love,
Instead of guilt and pride.

A day may come in time
When everything is right,
And love and joy surround us
Through darkness and through light.
The stars will soon be shining
Not only high above,
But deep within our tender hearts,
Ever filled with love.

MAD SCULPTOR WIND

by D. LeAnn Krueger

Falling soft snow covers the bare black road.
Thicker and thicker it falls
Until road and roadside are one.
Suddenly out of the north
Comes the angry, howling, biting wind,
Swirling and whirling, tossing and throwing the
new fallen snow.

The quiet countryside is now the workroom of
Mad Sculptor Wind.

Piling and piling, piling ever higher,
Blasting and blowing and carving, until
The snow becomes stately, majestic mountains
Plugging the road and sides.
As suddenly as he came, the mad sculptor
departs.
Satisfied with his efforts,
He leaves the snow mountains to stand in the
silence and cold.

DEATH

by James Selchert

Many people are afraid of you –
Your many dreadful ways to bring demise.
You do not frighten me in the least,
Well not in the way you might think.
I am not afraid of the unknown,
Or horrified that I might suffer,
An untimely and painful death.
What really frightens me about you?
The way you hurt me the most
Is taking the ones I love so dearly.
That is when I most dread your coming.
When you take loved ones and leave us,
Suffering and mourning their loss.

THE DREADED BOWLING BALL

by Brent Jacobson

This crazy game of bowling tests my nerves.
Throwing this strange sphere with holes in it,
for my fingers,
making me and that sphere as one.
Why?
Why,
do this grueling test of skill,
luck,
and nerve?
This is fun!
A challenge.

Finding myself talking to the ball is sometimes
scary!

The ball even answers.

Throwing this ball down the lane with the right
trajectory,
speed, and
roll arouses me.

The anticipation of a strike heightens.

Pow!

the pins explode into the pit,
except the dreaded 10 pin.

The joy changes to anger.

That sphere of mine

would like to stay down in the pit
with its friends,
the pins.

When that ball comes back up that long tunnel,
the ball return,

I give it hell!

Why

Did you do something so stupid as to leave
a 10 pin?

Are you and those pins out to make my life
miserable?

This ball's reply is,

You aim and throw me down this,
damned alley,

and you still have the gall to blame me for that
stupid

10 pin?

Look, at least I'm smart,

I roll down the alley

inflicting pain on those pins,

instead of receiving punishment.

I reply,

Well then, let's go and inflict some pain on that
10 pin.

BETTER DAYS

by Cyndi Jones

do i walk away hoping
you will realize just
what we have

the tender love and trust
the special moments
when nothing matters
except each other and
the closeness we have

i am afraid of losing you
of your realizing too late
that what we have is good
and right

i know there are other paths
for me to follow and
that i can make it
on my own

but i hate to say goodbye
dear friend for goodbyes
are so final

so i will just say

Better Days

A FOND REMEMBRANCE

by Dan Amert

Today is like any other day
Out on these salt flats as
I wait impatiently for my next
Customer to check into Room #1.
I dreamed last night of a movie
I had seen many years ago at
"Home."

All I can remember about the movie was
This large shark which prowled the
Salty waters, waiting for lovely
Women to meet him. The thrill of the
Shark's meetings gave me so many
Ideas for...

Oh, no! Mother's calling! I'd better
See what she wants before she becomes
Upset with my customers and me.

PRETENDING

by Susan Francis

When I was little, I used to dream and play;
I would pretend I was a princess
and I would find my prince someday.
I would pretend I lived in a castle,
and I was loved by everyone.
I would pretend that my prince loved me.
And for awhile pretending was fun.
Till one day I faced reality
and I had to live my life--
I was not a princess, nor
a prince's wife.
I did not have a prince charming
to call my very own,
I liked my world of fantasy, but
I have grown.
I can no longer pretend that I have a
prince to love me,
That my heart is like a keyhole and a
prince holds the key.
I can no longer pretend to be happy and
safe from all kinds of sorrow,
But whether I fantasize life or live it,
the sun will rise tomorrow.

REFLECTIONS IN A CAMPFIRE

by Dan Amert

Last night I stood by a campfire,
Watching nature in the twilight.

I looked into the burning embers
As if they were crystal balls.
Searching through their brightness for
Answers I need.

I have tried to heal the wounds that
Live deep in my heart. Wounds from
Battles I could have prevented. The
Wounds have scarred over, scarred never
To heal.

The fire's destruction rages on, but in
Its crystal balls I see. I see that life is
A blessing. The time we are given is for
Building, not destroying.

I left the campfire for the darkness
Outside of its glow. To rebuild a life
Once shattered by War.

WHO AM I?

by Susan Francis

Who am I? Where do I belong?
Am I the tree swaying in the wind,
Branches growing, reaching out,
Bending and yielding in time?
Then who am I?
Am I the rock, cold and hard,
Unchanging with the weather,
Unfeeling to your needs?
My leaves are green
In need of warmth and light.
But you, unchanging, watch
As my leaves turn and fall.
How can I reach out?
I lack all motion of time.
In another world I sit,
Watching as your boughs begin to
break.
The leaves have fallen now,
Branches bare and empty.
On the ground below, a rock lies
hidden
In a pool of empty color.
WHO AM I?

MY SON TURNS 18

by Margie Phillips

When I first met him,
Oh! What a mutt.
No eyebrows, puff of hair
A roly-poly, mini-person.
He came packaged that way.

He didn't mind sleeping,
Ate like a pig.
Fat, lazy and snuggly,
My smiling babe.
He came packaged that way.

Charlie Brown in a baseball hat
Football tucked under his arm.
Fishing for hours
Waiting for a bite.
He came packaged that way.

Smiling at the girls
As he tripped over his feet.
Independent and naughty
This cute, freckled-face boy.
He came packaged that way.

The giddiness of childhood
Joins hands with young adult.
The threshold of manhood
Stealing child away.

But now we move on
To a higher, better plane.
From caretaking Mom
To warm, lifelong friends.

I purposely sought
This person in my life.
The reward of this investment
More precious than gold.

I'll take all the praise
And the punishment, too.
It's nothing I did
That makes this son shine.
He just came packaged that way.

ICE CREAM TROUGH

by Greg Kludt

A few feet tall, a few feet wide,
Six large cannisters sit inside.
A worn spot in the floor in front,
Indicates the place to hunt
For that substance coveted by so many,
That the last in the line may not get any.

Again and again, the throngs check the trough,
Searching the flavors by lifting lids off,
Scanning the buckets, they search for their dips.
Never even considering the size of their hips,
The fair sex can always be relied on to devour
This treat that makes them more ample by the
hour.

Three cheers for the trough at old DSC,
The builder of bodies you can't help but see,
After Diet Coke and heaps of dry salad,
When craving for ice cream, think of my ballad.
Before making grievance against this short
verse,

Wipe the ice cream from round your mouth first.

WENDI

by Janet Draine

As I sit here watching the sunset,
I wonder just how bad it could get;
What is it going to take
Before we feel the undulating quake,
Watch the earth roll and shake,
See the trees tumble and break?
What will happen, my friend?
Will I ever see you again?

I notice you're watching Tom Brokaw
Deliver the evening news:
People breaking the law –
Women and children left black and blue.
Are you really listening?
What feeling does this bring?
As if you'd heard my thoughts,
You look me in the eye.

What is it, Wendi?
Can you see more than I?
Your callous appearance is deceiving,
You had me believing.

PLINIUS SECUNDUS THE YOUNGER SPEAKS OF VESUVIUS

by Constance Weber

Ah, Tactus, my friend,
What brings you at day's end?
My...where are my manners, come in, come.
A goblet of wine...certainly you'll have some.
Take your ease and recline with me;
Let us soak up the day's last rays and drink in
the sea.

Perhaps you will tell me why you are here...
...Come Tactus, I am no seer.
Can this be?...You want more of my flight
From that horrid terror of Vesuvian night?

Oh, my friend...my friend.
Memories that make me bend.
Those the days when the gods forsook
And my uncles' lives they took.
I've told you of the darkened sky
While in Misonum I did lie,
...but twenty scant miles away...
Our Naval Base did rock and sway...
Ships overloaded with the masses...
Mothers, lads...and yes, lasses.

To escape the grit we fled.
Save your lives, the sailors said.
Day turned to night,
To breathe...simply breathe...a fright.
But of this, I've told you before,
And yes, I realize you want more.
Who knows, Tactus, it may do me good
To unburden my memories; it surely could,
Perhaps ridding this gray-beard of a great
weight
Telling you of man's unbidden fate.

Well...at last the air began to clear.
We traveled by sea...not without fear.
A shock awaited us...
I cannot stress enough, Tactus.
The...the bodies washed against the ship,
Oh, my youth...my quivering lip.
We came to Herculaneum's shore.
Alas our dismay! It was no more.
I vowed then and there

To find my relatives caught unaware.

Youth itself a curse...yet the ground aboil,

We had to wait for cooling of the soil.

Three years I bided my time...

Amassing a crew to dig the hated, blackened
lime,

Boring through Vesuvius' mislaid top,

At last their villa found - we could not stop.

Fountain uncovered, then tiled atrium,

Corpses of Herculaneum!

My relatives uncovered, huddled close together

Tried to protect themselves from vile weather.

Little cousin unshrouded, died with doll in hand.

Her older brother clutching cake with sand.

Aunt and Uncle in a tangle...their babe between,

Entwined and bunched...a horrid scene.

Their ghostly remains in such agonized pain...

Hallowed grounds...we must not profane.

Alas, Tactus, my spirit still roams

Over those barren Vesuvian-made loams.

Weeping...sobbing over the waste,

Long gone ash yet taints my taste.

Memories haunt me. Total recall

Of death, stench, oh sulphurous fall.

Thoughts wild in the throes of evil

Of the fateful days of the gods' upheaval.

The offerings I've made...in Apollo's shrine,

Hoping to appease his anger through prayer and
wine.

...Now you know all, Tactus, my friend,

Of Pompeii and Herculaneum's end.

And of the small part I played.

You see why the telling was delayed.

Never again will this mouth speak

To tell or my pen to seek,

That awesome terrible, horrible time,

When the gods clapped and sang in rhyme,

Shaking the Neapolitan earth...

Solely for amusement and mirth.

ODE TO THE GARBAGE DISPOSAL

by D. LeAnn Krueger

Why do you hate me,

You with the great, gaping, stainless steel
mouth,

Who usually chug, grind and gurgle,

When I feed you the best of the garbage?

Gushing and slurping, you swallow.

Down goes the garbage to some faraway hollow.

But tonight you rebelled, you erupted

You swallowed and then,

Groaning and growling and clanking,

You threw it all up again.

What a terrible mess!

Who is to clean up, you horrid old bore?

Why it's me who is scrubbing the floor,

While you sit there and smirk.

BATTLES

by J.R.

I often dream of nights I'd sit and
watch the risin' sun. And
I spoke to you of life, and of
the battles I had won.

A warm wind blowin' memories
makes me long for home, but
A cold wind blows much harder and
makes me want to roam.

Let me go, from this lonely place
before my dreams are shattered
by love I can't erase.

Let me run from this lonely land
before my dreams all vanish,
like water in the sand.

REFLECTIONS

by Brenda Grimm

there's nothing quite so disheartening
as a soul who's lost his way;

I compare the person this man once was
with the shadow today.

gone is the sparkle that once enhanced
eyes so alive,
so blue...

they're reddish now
and very dull...

and what made it all the sadder
was a stranger,
a fool

so mean---

with his look of disgust
and his smirk of assurance

I could not bear the sight
of his ironic display

stepping out of the way,

I could not suppress my rage...

I asked if he felt the better man,
had he never known desolation?

I rejoiced to see him bridle!

ah, yes, he must be of the chosen elect--

was Hitler, perhaps, his idol?

and then I thought, ashamedly,

I am just as guilty,

just as vain--

for I judged and loathed

and wished him ill

and in that action

aborted God's will.

none of this touched my friend, though,

he's too far away--

all I can do is hope

he'll come back again one day...

but I doubt it.

OLD GYPSY QUEEN

by D. LeAnn Krueger

Old gypsy queen squatting by the campfire
Stirring the bones and the soup in a kettle so
black,

What are you thinking?

What are you remembering?

And what do you see?

Are you recalling another time so long ago,

When your now brown skin, so aged and
wrinkled, was olive and supple?

When your piercing black eyes sparkled and
flashed in your youth?

When your long black hair now streaked with
grey, tied up in a knot,

Was a long shining mane that blew in the wind?

Is this what you are thinking?

Is this what you remember?

And is this what you see?

Old gypsy queen squatting by the campfire

Your skinny old fingers so gnarled by time

Are painfully grasping the spoon in the kettle.

What are you thinking?

What are you remembering?

And what do you see?

That these are the hands whose fingers once
long, slender and straight

Resplendent in diamonds and rubies and gold,

Told fortunes of wonder from the hands of the
young and old?

Tracing palm lines, you gave them a promise
Of a life that was long, exciting and rich,
While you slipped off their watches or lifted their
coins?

So smooth was your trick, there was never a
twitch.

Is this what you're thinking?

Is this what you remember?

And is this what you see?

Old gypsy queen squatting by the campfire
Watching the sparks fly as you add another
stick.

What are you thinking?

What are you remembering?

And what do you see?

Do you see a young girl so lovely and lithe

Whose long billowing skirt blows in a rainbow of
color,

Red, green, blue and yellow, as she dances and
dips

To the soft haunting music of violins sweet

Golden loops in her ears, ankles circled in gold,

And ruby red lips awaiting a kiss?

Is this what you are thinking?

Is this what you remember?

And is this what you see?

Old gypsy queen squatting by the campfire

The dogs come sniffing in hopes of a bone.

What are you thinking?

What are you remembering?

And what do you see?
 The handsome young man who has been making
 the music
 Passing his fiddle to one who is near,
 Brushing back his curly, black hair, his eyes at-
 winkle
 As he leaps to his feet, never missing a beat.
 He grabs you tenderly and brushes your cheek;
 Kissing and holding you close, he whispers, "I
 love you."
 Squeezing you tight, he dances you into the
 shadows.
 Is this what you're thinking?
 Is this what you remember?
 And is this what you see?

 Old gypsy queen squatting by the campfire
 Up comes a wee one who gives you a hug.
 What are you thinking?
 What are you remembering?
 And what do you see?
 Who do you see in the twilight of long ago?
 A mother who cradles her babe to her breast,
 And croons an old lullaby as she places her babe
 on pine boughs to rest?
 What do you hear as the darkness begins to fall?
 Do you hear the trickle of some faraway cold
 mountain stream?
 Are you hearing the old owl that hoots in the
 trees?
 Do you hear the wild laughter of your children
 before bed?

Is this what you are thinking?
 Is this what you remember?
 And is this what you see?

Old gypsy queen squatting by the campfire
 Darkness has fallen and the soup's all gone.
 What are you thinking?
 What are you remembering?
 And what do you see?
 The campfire burns low, soon it will be only a
 glow.
 Life like the fire, burns bright for a time.
 Daylight is spent and night's curtain falls.
 The campfire becomes ashes, soon cold and for-
 gotten,
 Is that what awaits you, old gypsy queen?
 Is this what you are thinking?
 Is this what you are remembering?
 And is this what you see?

ONCE I WAS TOLD

by Cyndi Jones

once i was told that there
 comes a time to laugh and
 love again but i was hurting
 too bad to listen to such
 nonsense i wanted to
 stay locked behind my
 reinforced walls of self
 pity and anger

then when i was not looking
you came and touched my
very soul you the kind
and gentle ... were hurting
and scared too we
understood one another
and did not push

that was yesterday ... so long
ago now i am pushing
i want to keep laughing
and loving the walls
are gone and i am whole
let's share the dreams
of our tomorrows and
the tears of yesterday

life goes on and mine will too
with or without you
the time has come for
you to decide which
way it will be

HE'S GONE

by Bev Stopfer

You spent all my money;
Now you say you're leaving,
You sit and laugh at your wit,
Telling me how dumb I am.

Yesterday you threw out my houseplants,
Knowing they were my pride and joy.
After you left I salvaged
Some roots and most of the leaves.
With shaking hands I prepare dinner
praying you'll eat before you leave.
"So, eat your salad, don't tell me it's bitter.
It's just that you're anxious to go."

Now you've gone, I consult my plant book.
It claims both Lily of the Valley
And Poinsettia leaves are poisonous.
I hope so.

THE TEXTURE OF FALL

by Florence Muller

"Crisp" is the word for Autumn.
Crisp leaves that crunch underfoot
(I always walk through the deepest piles);
Corn stalks whispering with dry, golden leaves.
Cool, crisp air with a promise of winter;
Bold copper, gold, russet -- no soft pastels.
A sky of brittle blue like a Depression Glass bowl
Inverted over us.
Smoke from burning leaves that takes me back
To childhood Halloweens.
Burning leaves smell
crisp.

SHARP?

by Verlin Prostrullo, Jr.

So you think you're sharp?
Perhaps you are, perhaps not.
When you hit the neighbor's flock
And rid him of two lambs,
Then you may have been sharp.
The time you went through
The henhouse with no resistance,
Was that sharp?
The mouse that ran his course
Into your outstretched jaws,
That was sharp!
On the occasion when you snatched
The plight before mom could intervene,
Again your sharpness was apparent!
Today when you tried the calf
You learned the truth of sharpness!
Though you learned, you gained no profit
As your life was ripped from
You by the sharpness of its mother's horn!

PRAIRIE CURE

by Mollie Freier

As I drive north,
I see the hot wind blast the grass
Into yellow stubble.
There are few windbreaks--
Clumps of trees
Standing in fields
Perhaps where houses once were.
I'm alone with my memories here.

In ninety-degree heat
Under a huge sky without clouds,
The sun beats down,
Bringing everything into fiercely sharp focus.

Haystacks perch on hillsides,
Their tops bleached yellow--
Blond as children's hair.
There are no people on this landscape.

But memories become small beneath a sky like
this

(Under a sun like this
They should shrivel up and blow away).
The sun alters everything--
Turning the fields to the golden
Carpet of a throneroom,
Burnishing wildflowers, weeds, and sunflowers
(Even the blackbirds are crowned with gold).

The landscape is so clean
It glitters:
The leaves of the corn shine like silver.
The prairie is swept and garnished,
And the devils have stayed in the city.

My car tops a hill,
And I see the highway straight before me
Tinged pink
With rose quartzite on the shoulder.

TIT FOR TAT

by Leonardo Beechnut

Tit for tat
butter and fat
you kill my dog
i kill your cat

Me oh my
apples and pie
you break my thumb
I poke out your eye

HOW I HATE THE NIGHT

by Bodweller Muck

Now the sun has gone to bed
But my sight is not dead
For I can see in infrared.
How I hate the night.

17,000 books on a library shelf
Fell on and killed a 2-foot elf,
The killing book was the 112th.
How I hate the night.

Now I seek the meaning of life
Does it matter I beat my wife?
But this page is full of strife.
How I hate the night.

1981

by Quasar Lymphnode

I grew up in a time that
was quite meaningless. They told
me "Boy, fire will burn, but it's
painless!" They tried to tell me where to go,
and don't ever let my feelings show--
it's such a waste.

They keep asking questions, they
keep hearing his. Go tell the
children to cover their eyes;
remember the warning and
all it implies; we've seen the dawn
of yesterday's skies.

APRIL 15

by James Swanson

I saw an old man cry
yesterday,
who stood beside the puddled
grime
of last year's snow
And stared,
oblivious to my
intrusive eye, at what I could not see.
Interloper, I (too late)
could not avoid my
trespass
and perforce
had to splash past him
on the narrow walk.
I knew him
at least by sight
and never had I seen him
but he captured my fancy
Like an ancient
mariner,

alien in a prairie town,
anachronism in a long blue
Salvation Army coat.
He scarcely noticed that
I passed –
As I humbly did
on that cold-warm, fresh-dirty
15th day of April.

He ruined my whole spring day.

COMPUTER MADNESS

by D. Hodne

It's ten after twelve, you machine sublime.
Bring out those metaphorical thoughts of mine.
Token's been booted, processor in,
Doc been created, no name within.
Oh, Samsung, don't just sit looking at me.
Your Halloweenish orange, your sticky keys.

Of all the things that you can do,
Spreadsheets, SAS, calculus too,
There must be a monologue poem in you.
Let's see, revise document, blank.doc, page end.
Can I write something about that? Pretend!
Pretend!

Oh, God! it's twenty to,
What the hell is wrong with you.
I pat your head during compilation
All you give me is aggravation.
Syntax, syntax, file not found,
Program aborted, too many errors abound.

Come on, come on, you insensitive part,
Take this poem thing, quick, to heart,
If you don't conjure something now,
No spell check time will you allow.
Oh, you're not so smart and it's time to stop,
Hell, you got A on the bottom and B on top.

JACK

by Beverly Stopfer

Jack and his widowed mother
lived in a run-down shack.
They were poor and hungry
just living on dreams.

Jack stalked a rich man,
sneaked into his house.
He robbed him of his money,
his source of income,
even his only entertainment.
Then in fright Jack killed him.

Jack and his widowed mother
lived happily ever after.
But then you all have read
"JACK AND THE BEANSTALK."

BUBBLE GUM

by Thomas Cummins

That gum upon the sidewalk
Isn't there no more.
It's on my rug, and on my chair,
And even on the floor.
I have this pair of tennis shoes
And I wear them every day.
I passed that gum with ample care,
But they picked it up some way.
It seems a funny thing you know,
This gum upon my shoe,
Instead of wearing off, I think,
That somehow this thing grew.
I leave a trail everywhere,
On everything I touch.
I have one foot that sticks to things.
I don't like it very much.
I guess I'll have to live with it,
Although some people laugh.
It's the only pair of shoes I wear,
'Cause it's the only pair I have.

I'm getting kind of used to it,
That gum that's stuck down there,
And I'll probably keep it for a while
If it stays out of my hair.
Some people call me crazy,
Some people say I'm dumb.
But is there really more to life
Than being stuck on gum?

THE OLD HOUSE

by Florence Muller

Beside the road, you sit alone
Windowpanes broken, gate hanging down
Neglected, unkempt, grass overgrown.

Years, years ago when you were new
And children played around your yard,
Memories piled up inside of you
And ghosts of the past are now standing guard.

What tales could you tell if you could speak
Of love and tears, of smiles and frowns
Of games of tag and hide-and-go-seek
Of hopes realized-- hopes dashed to the ground.

Now, in the gray light, this winter day
You slowly sink into decay.
How does it feel to be standing alone
Never again to be anyone's home?

